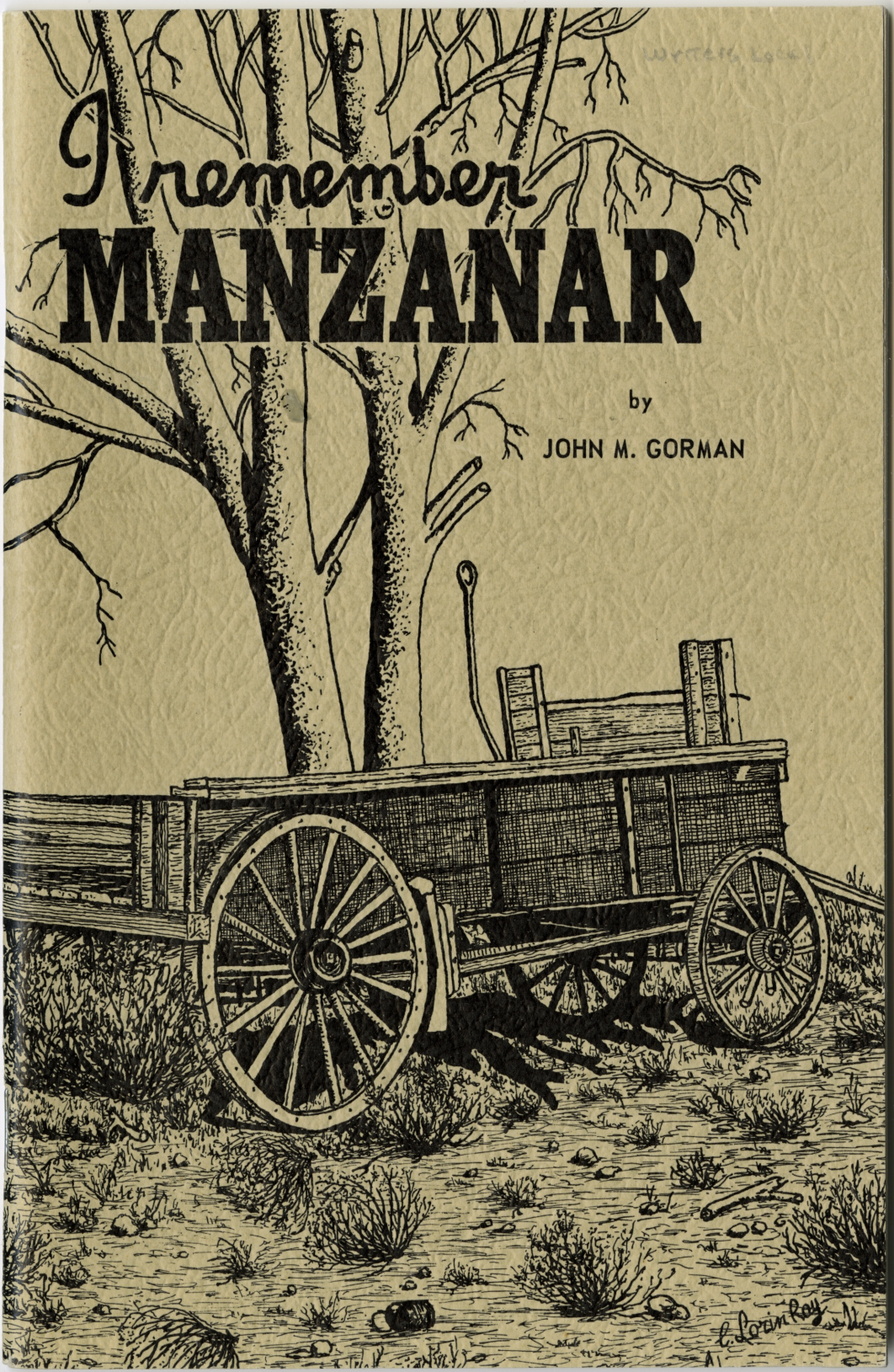
I remember MANZANAR

by

JOHN M. GORMAN



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George's Creek

There are many old town and settlement sites in Owens Valley that have not been forgotten by the settlers who knew them well. Many things are missing; the homes the outhouses, the cellars, the fruit and shade trees, the fields of alfalfa and pasture grass, the corrals, the stores, the garbage dumps and even most of the old timers that made these towns are now gone.

George's Creek, so named for Indian Chief George who had a small rancheria there, is located half-way between Lone Pine and Independence. Being eight miles from each town, the ranchers at George's Creek had their choice of which town they went to for their shopping, saloon visiting or a show with their girlfriends.

The ranches all had alfalfa fields and plenty of wild pasture grass because they specialized in raising cattle to keep themselves in supplies. At this time (around 1900) they had not found anything else that paid better. Of course the ranchers all had their own gardens, chickens, pigs, cows and fruit trees. They raised enough horses to ride and do their farm work. Everyone had a nice driving team and buggy which was used to go into town or just to take a ride if you ever got the time. The people were mostly of German descent with a few Irish mixed in to kind of even things up.

We had the George and Emma Rhinehackels on the south side of our ranch. They were stock men and had both cattle and sheep on a rather large scale, running around 150 cows and later on 2,000 - 3,000 sheep. They had up to 100 acres of alfalfa and were doing real well.

Next on the list was old John Lacey, the father of Mark and Tom. The boys were good cowmen at an early age and did most of the cattle work. They did not do much farming other than they had about 40 acres of alfalfa and lots of good meadow grass. They had a cabin up at Brown

Manzanar picnic in 1931

Meadows where they stayed in the summer to look after their cattle, running 150 or 200 head most of the time.

These old timers from George's Creek ran a breed of cattle that answered their needs at that time. They were called short horned Durhams. Their milk was very rich and the calves kept fat. The cows had rather long legs which made it easy for them to travel over the rough mountain trails. We tried some Texas Long Horns which were easy to drive but they didn't put on much weight. The Black Angus were easy to handle, but the old timers didn't know much about them in the early days.

The old mountaineers in my time all lived in tents at first, but later they built log cabins. The logs were cut and left to season over the winter months. The cabins were a big improvement over the tents.

Dr. Baxter, Russel Spainhower, Harold Baxter and I ran about 630 head of cattle up in the Goyoute, Crabtree and Tindall area. We had built a log cabin on Tindall and put a barbed wire fence around Crabtree Meadows. The cattle did real well although some of the meadows had flat rocks with cracks in between them in which the cows would step occasionally and break their legs. When we drove the cattle out one year, I had to shoot four of them because they were too badly crippled. Several others died from eating Larkspur. It is a poisonous plant that grows in some of the canyons and stays green late in the fall after most of the other grasses have dried out.

We started our drive out about the 18th of September. The Equinox storm came a few days early and caught us on the summit of Mt. Tindall with what was left of our 630 cattle. The snow and hail was falling thick and fast and it must have been twenty or thirty degrees below zero. All of our help left us and went down to Anvil Camp at the foot of the hill. Dr. Baxter and I were the only ones left and the cattle became confused and just milled around. I had a Durham bull that I had got from a Fresno dairy and trained to be the leader of the herd. I found him finally, and got the cattle started down the trail.

When we reached the camp, they had a fire going and the coffee cooking. It was a wonderful feeling---both the fire and the coffee as we were almost frozen to death. The rest of the trip was easy.

My Brother-in-law, Johnnie Bell, used to take his cattle up to Lake Rhode. He went up there once in a while to see how they were doing. On one occasion he missed a young two year old heifer. Looking around, he went to a Sierra Club camp that was nearby and saw his heifer hanging up. They said they were short of meat and offered to pay for it. Rather than have trouble, he sold it to them for $40.00. Cattle were cheap in those days.

Top of Mount Whitney in 1912

Another of my Brothers-in-law, Bert Strathearn, had a log cabin built on the South Fork of the Kings River where he used to run his horses. Someone burned it down, but we never did find out who did it.

Next to them were the Albers--two boys and two or three girls. They were hard working and industrious people making their living by running cattle. The girls worked around the different places in town helping out with housework. I had one of the girls helping me when the thrashing crew was working. A big thunder and lightning storm came up so I came in from the fields. I did not see the girl so asking my wife where she was, I found out that she had hidden under the bed and would not come out until the storm was over.

Mark Lacey was the same way about thunder and lightning. On one occasion he was playing Solo with three other men in a tent. Lightning hit the clothes line, ran into the tent and around the phonograph, killing two dogs that were sleeping on the ground.

The Strohmeyer's had a ranch of about 160 acres at George's Creek also. The old man had one glass eye. On one occasion when he had to go to town for groceries he had two Indians working for him in the fields. He took out his glass eye and placed it on a rock nearby telling them that the eye would watch them, making sure they kept working while he was gone. You can't fool the Indians--one of them took off his hat and placed it over the glass eye and they had a nice rest until they saw Strohmeyer coming back.

Strohmeyer's son looked after their cattle at Monache Meadows during the summer months. One day he noticed one of the cows lying dead in the meadow. Not knowing too much about disease, he skinned the cow out to save the hide. Unfortunately, the cow had died from anthrax. The boy picked up the infection through a pimple or small scratch on his face and died within a few days. That disease cost the cattlemen a lot of cattle. They seem to die right away and generally it hit the best cows.

The Hunters lived at George's Creek also. Of their several boys, Will Hunter became County Clerk in Independence, Johnnie worked away from the ranch, Beveridge was one of the top cowboys in his time (he is still alive and running cattle), Don, the youngest, worked at odd jobs, and Nellie, a daughter, was an excellent side saddle rider.

Living close by were the Scofields. We called the father Blue Beard. He was quite a character. I do not know if he could get a job or even if he ever wanted one. He would visit neighboring cellars and help himself to milk or anything else he took a fancy to. There were several beautiful and talented girls in the family. One of them, Mabel, taught school and later married Jess Hession, the Deputy Attorney General and District Attorney.

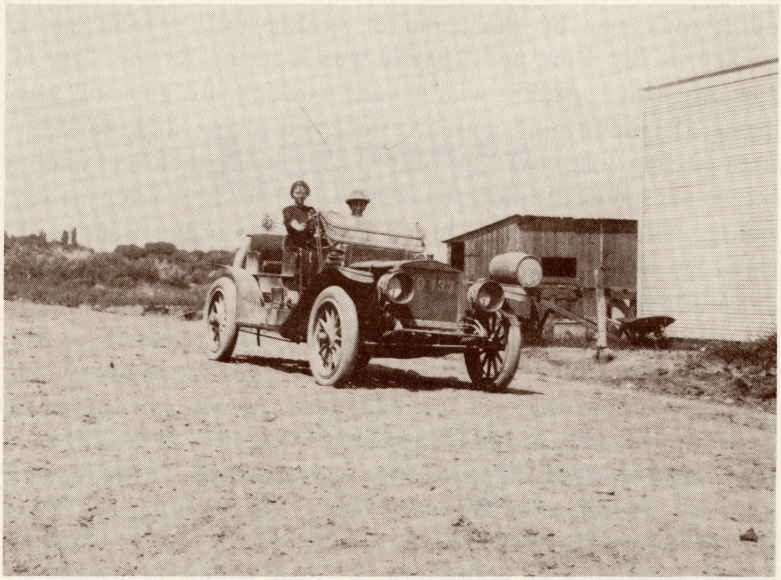
Lecta, the oldest, married Mark Wright, a relative of the Wright Brothers who invented the airplane. Matie, the youngest daughter, played golf in San Francisco in the early days and made quite a name for herself.

There was also a Grammar School at George's Creek at this time with about 12 or 15 children in attendance.

Fifteen or twenty Indians lived in the area. Some of them owned land and later sold out to the City of Los Angeles. Henry Lenbeck had a ranch above the old Moffet Ranch where he ran cattle. He also worked for the Rhinehackels and was nicknamed 'Stokes' by Mrs. Rhinehackel.

I must not forget the McGoverns. Old Gus was quite a character. At one time he used to compete with other wrestlers. His nice family, mostly girls, helped him run cattle, did a little farming, and even helped shovel snow off the hay stacks in the winter. Nellie worked for me one winter helping out when my wife had a baby. She took care of my pigs and did other odd jobs. She certainly liked to work and knew what she was doing.

Manzanar School House, about 1913
(nearing completion)



Daphne Hatfield & Leroy Roper (1912)

Angie, one of the other girls, later married Arlie Brierly. Their son Hughey later on became Superior Court Judge of Inyo County. I think that he was one of the youngest judges we ever had. But, as things go, he was not long for this world. He died shortly after he was elected, I think of a heart attack.

Old Gus McGovern used to take a little drink of fire water once in a while. This was about the time automobiles came into circulation. On one occasion a couple of Gus's friends, Pete Myers and another, took Gus into town with them in an old two seater Model T that didn't havea top. Gus was in the back seat and about half way home Pete noticed that Gus wasn't in the back seat. They turned around and went back looking for him. Soon they found him, unharmed. Once again his wrestling days had come in handy.

The Kispert boys had moved off their ranch and rented it to a man by the name of Archie Bull. John had a garage in Big Pine and Charlie was working for the City of Los Angeles. Archie was a hard working old guy and was doing alright raising mules. He lived alone, and, to keep from getting lonesome, he played his phonograph and used a lot of patent medicine (some kind of bitters if I remember right). There was a fine black cherry tree in his front yard. Once my wife, Dot, and I went down to pick some cherries and visit Archie as I knew him quite well. After the cherries were picked we went inside to listen to some of his new records. After playing a dozen or so, we thanked him and went on our way. A few days later Archie got too much medicine and went out of his head shooting at everyone that came around. Fortunately, he was not a very good shot for as far as I know he never did hit anyone. The sheriff was a little bit leary as he did not want to shoot old Archie so Gus McGovern, a good friend of Archie's, volunteered to go out and see what he could do. He got up the stairs and had a talk with Archie but to no avail. He tackled Gus at the head of the stairs and they tangled with both rolling down the stairs locked in each others arms. By the time the officers arrived, Gus had Archie under control. They sent him to the 'Bug House' where he soon recovered. Then he was sent to prison where he worked making Calcutta Grain bags. When it was time to turn Archie loose, he didn't want to go. He said he had no place to go, so he stayed there until he died.

Manzanar

Manzanar was started about 1903. It soon became an important fruit raising area. There were about 480 acres of apples, most of them Winesaps, Spitzen, Burgs, Roman Beauty's, Delicious and New Town Pippens. In addition to the apples, there were about 30 acres of Bartlett Pears, some 30 or 40 acres of Alberta peaches, 5 of prunes and several acres of grapes. The owners had planted the peaches in between the rows of apple trees to provide income until the apple trees were old enough to bear. They had also planted two rows of peach trees about half a mile long which they donated to the public so people wouldn't get into the main orchards and break down the branches. They also gave away all the peaches that fell to the ground. The Indians came from near and far and set up camps where they dried the peaches.

A packing house had been built and was being used to can the peaches and pack the apples. They had four 40 gallon pressure cookers and used about a dozen girls to peal and halve the peaches and pack them in gallon cans. I think they were labeled 'Manzanar Special'. The warm days and cool nights produced some of the finest peaches that ever grew.

The town consisted of the packing house itself with rooms upstairs where some of the packers slept, a general

Inside Hatfield Store & Post Office (1911)

store, a garage, a blacksmith shop, a school house with about 56 pupils, a lumber yard and also a place called the Wickie-up which was an ice cream and soft drink parlor run by two women --Mrs. Steve, a trained nurse, and another young married woman. It was a popular place to stop and they did a real good business.

A good many of the Manzanar people came originally from Montabello where they had been friends and neighbors.

Ira L. Hatfield had started the general store in Manzanar to make it possible for the people around to get their groceries and farming material without going the eight miles to Lone Pine or Independence. Hatfield also ran the post office. He and his wife, Ana, had two girls, Daphne and Cecil and one son, Russel.

Outside Hatfield Store & Post Office (1911)

Later, the store at Manzanar changed hands a couple of times. Hatfield was getting a little too much age on him to keep going at a high rate of speed. His girls had grown up and were young ladies now. When he got an offer to buy from Bob Baundhauer, he decided to sell out and spend more time with his pears. He had about 10 acres in pears at that time. Baundhauer was a good store keeper, later on moving to Independence where he operated the store formerly owned by A. W. and J. E. Eibeshutz. Baundehauer's brother-in-law, Walter Dow, ran a little lumber business there at that time. Also a man by the name of Cornealus had a little lumber yard, but things did not look so good. Business was slowing down and it was too uncertain to invest much money.

Anyway, Manzanar was a nice place to live. We were all like one big family. Everyone was friendly and we had many picnics and dances. Hunting was good and there was plenty of fruit to eat. The roads were all dirt, going from farm to farm. This was before the aquaduct was dug so we could drive anywhere we wanted to go.

The people of Manzanar had thought about the future. This place was to be their home and a home for their children.

A slaughter house had been built about 200 yards south of where the old George's Creek school house had been. It was a well built, cement block building costing about $50,000. There was a board fence around it as a holding coral.

On one occasion a couple of us boys from Independence dropped by to see what was going on. They were

Fruit packing crew

busy slaughtering cattle. There was a big Negro standing on the board platform over the path where the cattle walked who handled the sledge hammer. A little gate stopped the cow and the Negro's job was to hit it just above the eyes with the sledge. Then the butcher skinned out the animal.

Frank Krater, who ran a butcher shop in Independence, asked if he could try his skill with the sledge hammer. A young cow about two years old, I think a Roan Durham with pretty good sized horns was in the line. Frank took the double jack and let drive. Somehow, the first swing didn't drop her so he took a couple more swings, finally doing the job. They dragged the cow down to where Blackey was skinning out a steer that had been killed previously. The cow came to and took off after old Blackey. He had on rubber boots and kept slipping on the blood that was all over the floor. The cow did the same and Blackey was cutting at the cow every chance he got. I think he was aiming for her eyes. I guess the cow tired of the deal, broke out and headed back to the pasture up in the Kispert field.

About two weeks later, we were going by and they asked us if we would drive her down along with several other cattle they had up there. The escaped cow had quite a red spot on her head, but otherwise was alright.

The slaughter house handled chickens, turkeys, sheep and nearly every thing that you wanted to eat. Blackey asked me if I would go for a ride with him up the valley to get a load of turkeys. We drove to Bishop and I sure got into a job. He had ordered 300 or 400 of those turkeys. I caught them as they were tossed up from below. The hens weighed from eight to ten pounds each and the gobblers from twelve to sixteen pounds. He paid 35¢ a pound for turkeys with straight breast bones and 17¢ for crooked breast bone turkeys. We finally got them all loaded and took off for

Charles Hatfield

home. About where Aberdeen is now we got a flat tire, but other than that we came through okay.

It is too bad the slaughter house burned down. It was a nice building and a big help to the small cattle owners. Previously, one of the owners had taken his own life with a gun. I guess he was discouraged or had some other trouble that I do not know of.

About this time the City of Los Angeles was buying up most of the land in Owens Valley. Most of the people of George's Creek and Manzanar followed suit and the two towns merged.

L. to R. – Julia Hatfield, Ira Hatfield (store owner) Cecil Hatfield, Mrs. Hatfield

Julia Hatfield, a nurse and sister of Ira Hatfield, married Charlie Bevis from Tonopah, Tom Lacey, John Lacey's youngest son, married Cecil Hatfield and I married Daphne Hatfield. Russel Hatfield married Mabel Branson whose parents were old timers from Big Pine. Altha Branson married young Charlie Summers. You can see that the old timers and the newcomers were getting pretty well mixed up.

Now the City of Los Angeles aquaduct was nearing completion. The Manzanar people had all sold out and most of them had left the country. I was given the job of taking charge of Manzanar for the City of Los Angeles.

I had a regular crew of eight men working, spraying, cultivating and pruning. I used 5 or 6 tons of Arsenate of Lead to kill the moths and Calex worms. We had four sprayers, the last costing about $1600 had a model A engine. It took a strong man to hold the hose when spraying.

L. to R. – Cecil Hatfield, Annie Glade, Jake Glade, Dot Hatfield

The Calex worm came in generally after the spraying was over and entered by the stem of the apple causing us to give the fruit another spraying. We had to watch real close.

The bee men had passed a law that we could not spray until the blossoms dropped as the spray killed the bees. Bees were necessary to polonize the fruit. 'Bee' Smith as we called the bee man, had around 300 colonies of bees. His son George is still in the bee business and he is one of the best.

I gave the girls that pealed the peaches two rest periods of twenty minutes each, one in the morning and one in the afternoon. One of my sons, Herb, sold peaches in the front office for 50¢ a box when he was about twelve years old. In one month he sold about $1300 worth.

Old Jim Shepherd was one of the best all around men I had working for me. He believed in doing a man's work for a man's pay and did not hesitate to let the other men know when they were laying down on the job. The men thought I paid him extra to keep the other guys working. On one occasion he had taken on a little more whiskey than he could handle and sheriff Tom Hutchinson put him in jail. Old Jim wanted no part of it so when it got dark he made the night hideous with his war dance and howls. In the morning I got a call from the sheriff saying come and get my 'God damn Indian'. Jim said, 'Let me out. I work for John Gorman He need me'.

Not caring anything for money, Jim liked to show off even lighting his cigarette with a $1.00 bill. Actually, cigarettes were the cause of his death. He got too much whiskey one day and went up to Mrs. Edward's meadow to sleep it off. The grass was dry and he lay down in the shade of a tree. Evidently his cigarette set the grass on fire after he went to sleep. Soon he was surrounded by flames. Awakening, he climbed the tree to escape, but he could not get far enough away. He was overcome with fire and smoke and that was the last of old Jim.

I owe a lot of my success to my help. I did not have to watch any of them and they did not watch me. They had their work to do and they got it done. After I got the crop shipped out to the packing houses, I got a personal letter from some of them saying that the Manzanar apples were the best that ever came to their packing house. They wanted to rent the orchards from the City of Los Angeles and wanted me to take care of them.

It came around harvest time and I was starting to worry as I knew this valley well. Once the apples got ripe, it didn't take much wind to blow them off the trees. There was a man by the name of Lou Bones that had bought the crop or at least he was handling the picking and pack-

Ice skating on aqueduct

ing. Bill Benchley and I worked with him. We had 45 men to do the picking and packing of the apples. We had a conveyor that carried the apples down on rollers to the packing house. There were a lot of bins on each side of the conveyor with a trap set over each bin. When an apple of a given weight came along, it dropped into the proper bin. I had twelve girls working, sorting out any apple that had a blemish on it. Some of the girls could handle two bins.

Two girls with dark hair, wearing overalls and blue denim jumpers wanted a job picking apples. I thought they were boys so I got their names and put them on the payrole. In a couple of days some of the male pickers told me that I had hired two girls. They were real good pickers, handling their own ladders well and doing nice clean work. I simply moved them down to another part of the orchard away from the men.

On another occasion a car stopped and the man driving left off a girl who had evidently been living with him all summer. She asked for a job and I told her that she was in no condition to work. Then she asked for a gun and said she was going to shoot herself and throw the gun away so I would be up for killing her. I told her nothing doing and then took up a collection to buy her a bus ticket to Los Angeles.

We shipped our crop of fruit to Los Angeles on trucks and trailers. The pears had to be put in iced cars because they were very perishable. The pears from the Red Mountain Ranch were the best. The soil there seemed to be just what was needed to produce the best pears.

Manzanar Packing House

When we finally got the crop shipped, a count showed that we had sent 63,000 boxes of apples and 28,000 of pears. We only sent 30 boxes of peaches. The packing houses didn't want any more. They said that Manzanar peaches were so much better than the ones they were packing that the girls ate all of them.

Some of the apples did not color up to dark red so we didn't ship them. Some of the smaller buyers sent private trucks and loaded these apples with scoop shovels. We sold them for $3.00 a ton to be used as pie apples, apple sauce and cider. There must have been 3,000 or 4,000 boxes of uncolored apples as there was a pile of them as big as a small house. Then there were about another 3,000 boxes left on the ground that could have been used for the same purposes, but it cost us about $2.50 a ton to pick them up. No money in that.

The seed from the rotten apples that were left on the ground made good food for the quail during the winter. I also got a couple of sacks of wheat and fenced in about two acres of waste land. The fence kept the loose stock out and let the quail have the food. There were only about 40 quail there at that time and I thought a little help might keep them going. When the fall came around, I figured that there were in the neighborhood of 400 quail. Also I tried to keep the hunters out of the field to give the birds a better chance. In addition, about a dozen deer came down that winter and one mountain sheep.

One of my men, George Urquhart, had chased the mountain sheep on his way to work one morning. My thirteen year old son was in the pasture milking the cow when the sheep reached the pasture. The sheep jumped the first fence, but ran into the second one. He was tired from running and had his mouth open. Hitting the tight wire at top speed, he broke his lower jaw. He stayed around there a couple of days in a little park we had and then wandered

Manzanar Fun

south to a little ranch owned by a man named Horn, I think. Horn shot the mountain sheep and was fined $250.

I had quite a lot of different kind of people working at Manzanar when we harvested the crop. A good many of them were from Oklahoma and we had to be careful hiring them. They were something like the unions are today. If we didn't hire all the members of a family, they would all quit.

Housing was no problem because there were enough city houses to go around. The original people that had started Manzanar were almost all gone now.

There were three sisters working for me that could have made a good living in the circus. They were all married and lived with their husbands. One day they were

canning peaches when my little daughter Clair came in the packing house. She asked what was the matter with those women and why didn't they use the stools we had provided for the help to sit on. These women were certainly full grown, in fact, when they sat on the stools about one third of them hung over on each side. The three of them actually weighed over three-fourths of a ton; one was 480 pounds, one 550 pounds and the third 630 pounds. Nevertheless, believe you me, they could all do their share of the work. It was a pleasure to work with them.

I had one tree of Delicious Apples at Manzanar that I wish I had taken a picture of. The pickers said that they had never seen anything like it. One year it produced 145 boxes of field picked apples. When the limbs got heavy, we had to brace them up. In all, I used about 20,000 braces for the pears and apples. Each brace had two or three steel plates fastened to it which were used when the limbs were one above the other.

PEACH ORCHARD – L. to R. – Cecil Hatfield, Russel Spainhaur, Annie Glade, Jake Glade

Los Angeles Aqueduct Newly Completed

I also had charge of a forty acre orchard at Fort Independence that formerly belonged to Dr. Jersey. We called him 'The Duke' because I think, he came from England. I got about 5,000 boxes of apples off those trees.

Van Lutzow had installed the cement and slip joint steel pipes used to irrigate the orchards. It was just my luck to take charge when most of the steel pipe had rusted out. There were many holes in it which allowed the water to shoot 15 or 20 feet into the air. About two miles of the pipe line ran down the highway. It had been installed before there was a highway to bother about. So, when the highway was built, we had to bury the pipe about four feet deep while it was still full of water.

I had the help of the highway crew, the City of Los Angeles crew and my own crew. We didn't have much trouble burying it and it is still there today if it hasn't all rusted away.

The cement pipe came down a pretty steep grade and it had many holes in it also where the willows grew, filling the pipe with a tangled mass of roots. There was a place to turn the water out about four miles up the creek. On one occasion there was a hugh water spout and Jim Wilder, who was in charge at that time could not get up to shut the water off. The result was that the pipes filled with sand. I sure had a job cleaning them out and some never did get cleaned because they were packed too tight with sand.

My job was practically over but I was still looking after the City of Los Angeles property, houses and yards from Bishop down. I did some work in Bishop at the same time. I helped cook their barbecue dinners once a year and also helped the County of Inyo. One of the Fish Hatchery men and I helped to build Dehy Park in Independence. We fixed up the barbecue pit and other necessities.

Both the Manzanar and the Dr. Jersey orchards are a thing of the past now. They have died and dried up from lack of water and have been cut up for fire wood.

Then The "Japs" Came

Things had settled down. Most of the old timer small land owners had moved on. The big holders, Myers and Chaffe had come here to buy only as an investment. I suppose that most of the original settlers made out pretty good. They had the City of Los Angeles because the City had to have the land to control the water.

I guess Manzanar was one of the best places available to put the Japs until the war was over. The government hired a bunch of carpenters and all the other available help they could get at that time. Within several months the place was ready to bring in the Japs and the soldiers. When they arrived, the government took most of the Jap cars, crushed them and hauled them to the dump where they were buried by bull dozers.

Some of the Japs were loyal to the United States and some were still fighting for Japan. Several fights broke out among the Japs. One of my renters, Lauain Williams, was a guard at the camp and he had one of his shoulders broken and several Japs were killed during one fight. They put up a big cement monument with the names of the loyal Japs on it.

The disloyal Japs in camp used every means in their power to defeat the United States. They threw away bread by the full case and turkeys that had never had a fork stuck in them. There were a couple of Jewish boys, one called Abe and the other George Seagel, that had about 400 pigs. They rented a place from the City of Los Angeles that had formerly been called the Locust Grove. They put in a cement slab about twenty by sixty feet and used it to feed their pigs with the food the Japs threw away. The food cost them nothing except the expense of hauling it. They got

Concrete monument erected in honor of loyal "American Japanese" killed in camp revolt.

Portion of Manzanar Orchard in 1967

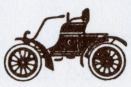
three or four old boars that some of the old timers were glad to get rid of. They offered me a young suckling pig if I would castrate the old boars. I had done a lot of work like that before, so I volunteered. I roped the boar and tied his head and front legs to a post, then put another rope on his back legs and tied it to the bumper of the car. By backing the car up, he was stretched out tight and the job was easy. They gave me a little runt that was not much good for anything, but I raised him to a nice pig that butchered out at about 125 pounds.

The Japs had about 400 pigs that they kept for themselves. They also had about 50 stands of badly diseased bees that the government had given them.

They put in a new cement pipe and built a big cement pond about a mile up the creek. It covered about half an acre and was four to six feet deep. It would have made a fine swimming pool if they had had a way to heat the water.

There was some alfalfa but it was mostly several thousand acres of meadow grass. They tried to bring the old orchards back, but most of the trees had died out so it was too late. They put all available land into gardens and had a nice lot of vegetables to eat. However, it looked as though only the loyal Japs did the work while the disloyal ones were still fighting for Japan.

The war ended and the Japs went home. All of the houses were taken down or sold except the community hall building. It is used today by the County of Inyo Road Department. The rest of the place has grown back to sage brush, willows, tumble weeds and salt grass---back to what it was in the beginning. It had the makings of a good little town at one time.



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JOHN M. GORMAN

Inyo County Pioneer

John Martin Gorman was born at Fort Independence April 12, 1886 on the old Gorman Ranch. John's Father, John Sasserfield Gorman, was sheriff of Inyo County in 1890. When John was 14 years old, he left school and took over the operation of the family ranch. John was associated with the Indians in the early days and taught many of them to farm. He had a great deal to do with the building of Independence but his main business was raising a family - - 2 boys and 2 girls - - ; building school houses, planting fish, and taking cattle up in the mountains for summer pasture. He helped to build a log cabin on Mt. Tindel which is believed to be still standing. He wrote his books at the age of 80, mainly from memory, and is now working on a book concerning his family.